

Paul Oskar Kristeller Fellowship – Leaves in Florentine Libraries (Overview)

Amidst the vast collections held by the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze are numerous volumes once collected by the Targioni Tozzetti family, whose members were central figures in the scientific and institutional developments in Florence. As I visited Florence in 2019 for a systematic examination of early modern herbals and their reading traces, I came upon two such volumes. I was surprised and excited to find not only fascinating annotations, but also traces of inserted plants, such as complete preserved blossoms pressed onto the page. According to my dating of the annotations as well as first comparisons with autographs, these two copies, one of Brunfels' *Herbarium tomis tribus* (1539), the other of Cesalpino's *De plantis* (1583), had been actively read and used by Ottaviano Targioni Tozzetti (1755—1829). Among other publications, the then director of the botanical garden wrote the *Dizionario botanico italiano* (1809), which was concerned with the same debates as some of his annotations alongside those plant traces. Can these inserted plant specimens be linked to his publications?

First visiting Florence for a few days in 2017, I found leaves in three copies of Mattioli's *Commentarii* (1554ff.): I then revised my approach to early modern paratexts and decided to do a systematic examination of all remaining copies from the works included in my corpus. Due to budget restrictions, I could only return for two weeks in March 2019. I examined thirty-two copies: An astonishing amount of early modern herbals presented me with preserved inserted plants or traces thereof, just as the Brunfels-copy owned by Ottavio Targioni Tozzetti. The results suggest that we need to further rethink some of our concepts regarding early modern reading practices, particularly herbals. Firstly, we need to include the concept of impagination, as proposed by Chang/Grafton/Most (2021), into our analysis of early modern reading practices, discussing other findings, such as drawings and inserted natural things in relation to annotations practices. Secondly, we should complement Genette's (1987) theory of authorial paratexts with the reader's paratexts, starting with the title written on the book spine. Finally, inserted natural things make evident the hybrid nature of those early modern prints: Deeply transformed by the reading practices and the insertion of natural things, they become living archives transgressing the boundaries of print and manuscript.

I am convinced that this is a good starting point to discuss further issues and challenges, not only of theoretical, but of methodological nature: With the support of the Paul Oskar Kristeller Fellowship, I want to return to Florence for an extended research visit. First, I will complement my current sample with the remaining thirty-four copies in the Florentine Libraries (Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Biblioteca di Scienze, Botanica, Biblioteca di Lettere, Umanistica, Biblioteca dell'Accademia della Crusca). Furthermore, I want to discuss my findings with librarians and researchers. I aim to publish the results in an in-depth article.